

I want to emphasize to Members on both sides of the aisle that this is a voluntary taking and is fully supported by the owner and is supported by BLM.

Mr. Speaker, we held hearings on this legislation last year. At that time, several concerns were raised by the administration and by the minority regarding the issue of valuation. The discussion centered around what was the true value of the property and whether either the Federal Government or the property owner was being treated fairly.

That very issue is what has held up the completion of the HCP itself for years. What this legislation does is provides initial compensation well below the estimated value of the property to the property owner, preventing the property from reverting to creditors. After the initial settlement, absent any action by the property owner or the Secretary of the Interior, the valuation issue is then moved into Federal court where the remaining unsettled value of the property will then be determined. The court, not Congress, not BLM, not the property owner, will make this determination. While all of the parties involved would have liked to avoid going to court, unfortunately, this is the best way to resolve this issue.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 880 is identical to the legislation passed under suspension of the rules in the last Congress. We have incorporated the same amendments that were made to this legislation last year.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill; and I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 880 and get this thing over with.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 880, introduced by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), is a legislative-taking. The bill mandates that 30 days after enactment, all right, title, and interest to 1,550 acres of private land in Utah will vest in the United States. This legislation is identical to a measure, H.R. 4721, which passed the House on October 3, 2000, but which the Senate did not act upon prior to adjournment.

A legislative-taking is an extraordinary procedure used by the Congress only a few times in the past 25 years. Further, the language of this particular taking is substantially different from that used in other rare cases.

There has been an ongoing controversy associated with the land identified by the legislation. Title to the property had been clouded for years; and the land has been the subject of significant litigation, as outlined by the Chair. While everyone agrees that the land in question should be acquired, there are still differences re-

garding how it should be done. Negotiations to acquire the property have been hampered by the landowner's insistence on using appraisal assumptions that are inconsistent with Federal acquisition standards.

The previous administration testified in opposition to this measure last year, stating its concern that the bill provides preferential treatment to one landowner and provides compensation above and beyond that received by other landowners. We do not have the views of the new administration, but I can guess what they might be.

Mr. Speaker, while there is still some question on certain provisions of H.R. 880, we do not object to consideration of the measure by the House today. However, we hope that some of these matters can be addressed before the bill is finalized and presented to the President.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 880.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GUAM WAR CLAIMS REVIEW COMMISSION ACT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 308) to establish the Guam War Claims Review Commission, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 308

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

##### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Guam War Claims Review Commission Act".

##### SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established a commission to be known as the "Guam War Claims Review Commission" (in this Act referred to as the "Commission").

(b) MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of five members who by virtue of their background and experience are particularly suited to contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the Commission. The members shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior not later than 60 days after funds are made available for this Act. Two of the members shall be selected as follows:

(1) One member appointed from a list of three names submitted by the Governor of Guam.

(2) One member appointed from a list of three names submitted by the Guam Delegate to the United States House of Representatives.

(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a Chairman from among its members. The term of office shall be for the life of the Commission.

(d) COMPENSATION.—Notwithstanding section 3, members of the Commission shall not be paid for their service as members, but in the performance of their duties, shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(e) VACANCY.—Any vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

##### SEC. 3. EMPLOYEES.

The Commission may appoint an executive director and other employees as it may require. The executive director and other employees of the Commission may be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service. Section 3161 of title 5, United States Code, shall apply to the executive director and other employees of the Commission.

##### SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATIVE.

The Secretary of the Interior shall provide the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, such administrative support services as the Commission may request.

##### SEC. 5. DUTIES OF COMMISSION.

The Commission shall—

(1) review the facts and circumstances surrounding the implementation and administration of the Guam Meritorious Claims Act and the effectiveness of such Act in addressing the war claims of American nationals residing on Guam between December 8, 1941, and July 21, 1944;

(2) review all relevant Federal and Guam territorial laws, records of oral testimony previously taken, and documents in Guam and the Archives of the Federal Government regarding Federal payments of war claims in Guam;

(3) receive oral testimony of persons who personally experienced the taking and occupation of Guam by Japanese military forces, noting especially the effects of infliction of death, personal injury, forced labor, forced march, and internment;

(4) determine whether there was parity of war claims paid to the residents of Guam under the Guam Meritorious Claims Act as compared with awards made to other similarly affected United States citizens or nationals in territory occupied by the Imperial Japanese military forces during World War II;

(5) advise on any additional compensation that may be necessary to compensate the people of Guam for death, personal injury, forced labor, forced march, and internment; and

(6) not later than 9 months after the Commission is established submit a report, including any comments or recommendations for action, to the Secretary of the Interior, the Committee on Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

##### SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) AUTHORITY OF CHAIRMAN.—Subject to general policies that the Commission may adopt, the Chairman of the Commission—

(1) shall exercise the executive and administrative powers of the Commission; and

(2) may delegate such powers to the staff of the Commission.

(b) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—For the purpose of carrying out its duties under section 5, the Commission may hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence as the Commission considers appropriate. The Commission may administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses appearing before it.

(c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title

5, United States Code, but at rates for individuals not to exceed the daily equivalent of the maximum annual rate of basic pay for GS-15 of the General Schedule. The services of an expert or consultant may be procured without compensation if the expert or consultant agrees to such an arrangement, in writing, in advance.

(d) **SUPPORT OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—Upon request of the Commission, the head of any Federal department or agency may provide support to the Commission to assist it in carrying out its duties under section 5.

#### SEC. 7. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.

The Commission shall terminate 30 days after submission of its report under section 5(6).

#### SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$500,000 to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 308, the Guam War Restitution Act. This act will establish a temporary commission to review an important matter that has been unresolved since World War II.

Just 4 hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor located in the territory of Hawaii, Japan invaded the American territory of Guam. The invasion and occupation caused immense suffering to the U.S. citizens and nationals living in Guam because of their intense loyalty to the United States. We cannot forget the sacrifices these men, women, and children made to keep our Nation and people free.

Although there was an intention to provide restitution to U.S. nationals of Guam, like other U.S. citizens, for loss of lives and property due to the war, postwar restitution acts by Congress mistakenly excluded them. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 308 would begin to correct this oversight by creating a temporary Federal commission that would determine the right amount to compensate the people of Guam for their deaths, permanent injury, forced labor, forced marches, and internment during World War II. This commission will last no more than 10 months and cost no more than half a million dollars.

Last year, the House unanimously passed the Guam War Restitution Act, and I ask my colleagues to again vote in favor of this good piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on January 30, 2001, I reintroduced H.R. 308, the Guam War Claims Review Commission Act. This bill is virtually identical to H.R. 755, which passed the House on September

12, 2000. Unfortunately, the Senate was unable to act on the bill before sine die adjournment of the 106th Congress.

Today marks a momentous occasion for the people of Guam. The early consideration and passage of H.R. 308 is a significant step toward the healing of the people who experienced the brutalities of enemy occupation during World War II, and for that I also would like to express my personal gratitude to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), the chairman of the committee, and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) for their consideration and speedy action on this particular piece of legislation.

Legislation regarding Guam war restitution has been introduced by every Guam delegate to Congress beginning with Guam's first delegate, Antonio Won Pat, and including my predecessor, General Ben Blaz. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 308 is a careful compromise that incorporates many congressional and Department of Interior recommendations that have been made over the years during which this issue has been considered. The measure before us today creates a process by establishing a Federal commission to review relevant historical facts and circumstances surrounding the war claims of Guamanians who suffered as a result of the Japanese occupation of the island during World War II. This process will determine eligible claimants, eligibility requirements, and the total amount necessary for compensation for the people of Guam who experienced death, personal injury, forced labor, forced march, and internment.

Today, I come before this distinguished body of individuals who represent a great Nation and a great people to tell a little story about their fellow Americans from across the Pacific who endured the atrocities of war to keep the spirit of America alive. I will once again tell of the experiences of the people of Guam during World War II and the many efforts to bring closure to this horrible chapter in their lives. I will tell this story in hopes that inside knowledge and understanding will be gained and the process to restore equity will move forward, and that the people of Guam, the World War II generation of the people of Guam, will be finally made whole.

Pursuant to the Treaty of Paris in 1898, which ended the war between Spain and the United States, the United States acquired sovereignty over Guam and Guam has remained an American territory since that time. On December 8, 1941, Japanese armed forces invaded Guam and seized control of the island from the United States.

From this moment on, Guam's place in American history was tragically etched. Guam was the only U.S. territory or possession or State with civilians present which was occupied by enemy forces during World War II. The island, with its population of approximately 22,000 civilians, was subjected to death, personal injury, forced labor,

forced march, and internment by Japanese soldiers. Many were executed by firing squads or beheadings; and the entire island was an internment camp, and families whose lives were once consumed with farming and subsistence living were now forced to labor for the needs of their occupiers.

But the will of the people of Guam was much stronger than the infliction cast upon them by the Japanese military. They concealed the presence of U.S. servicemen who remained on the island by moving them from house to house; they composed American patriotic songs and made makeshift American flags from tattered rags as a reminder, as a boost to their spirits, that America would soon return. Some even organized small militia units, often only teenaged boys to bedevil Japanese soldiers, hoping to ease the path for the return of U.S. military forces.

On July 21, 1944, American forces liberated Guam. Emerging from the hills en masse were a loyal and grateful people for the return of their American countrymen from across the Pacific. In response to this, on June 9, 1945, in a letter from the Honorable Strive Hansel, Acting Secretary of the Navy, to then Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, Mr. Hansel transmitted proposed legislation to provide relief to the residents of Guam through the settlement of what was called "meritorious claims." On November 15, 1945, the Guam Meritorious Claims Act authorized the Secretary of the Navy to adjudicate and settle claims for a period of only 1 year for property damage only occurring on Guam during the Japanese occupation. Certification of claims in excess of \$5,000 or any claims of personal injury or death were to be forwarded to Congress.

On June 8, 1947, Navy Secretary Forrestal appointed a civilian commission labeled the Hopkins Commission to study and make recommendations on the Naval administration of Guam. One of their strongest recommendations was that the war claims of the people of Guam should be addressed, and especially claims on personal injury and death, and that immediate steps should be taken to hasten this process. The report also stated that while many claimants were advised that the local Navy Claims Commission had the power to settle and make immediate payment of claims not in excess of \$5,000, that claims above that amount must go to Washington, which, of course, resulted in absolutely no action.

The report recommended that the Guam Meritorious Claims Act be amended to authorize naval officials to provide immediate, on-the-spot settlements.

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In response to this particular circumstance, and in fact to the circumstance involving all American nationals and citizens who experienced occupation, the 1948 War Claims Act

was enacted by Congress to address all of American victims of World War II. The War Claims Act of 1948 authorized the creation of a commission to make inquiries and settle the claims of American citizens and nationals and military personnel imprisoned during World War II.

Despite recommendations from the Hopkins Commission, the War Claims Act of 1948 excluded Guam. This led to the anomaly that many people from Guam who happened to be in the Philippines at the time were eligible for war claims, whereas their families who remained on Guam under enemy occupation were ineligible.

In 1950, Congress passed the Organic Act of Guam which made the people U.S. citizens. In 1951, the United States signed a peace treaty with Japan, which meant that no further claims by the people of Guam could be addressed directly to the Japanese. The people of Guam were left in this anomalous position of being unable to settle their claims directly with Japan.

In 1962, the War Claims Act of 1948 was further amended, and again Guam was not included. As a consequence, and despite the study and recommendations of the Hopkins Commission, which concluded that reparations for Guam that were provided by the Guam Meritorious Claims Act fell short of rehabilitating the island and redressing damages suffered by its people from the occupation of Guam, Congress still failed to address the recommendations. Today we are left with this situation.

For more than 2 decades, the issue has been aggressively pursued by the leaders of Guam. On December 30, 1980, the Government of Guam created a Guam Reparations Commission which compiled war damage claims for death, forced labor, forced march, internment, or injury for survivors or descendants who did not receive any reparations under the Guam Meritorious Claims Act. On the Federal level, as I have indicated, each of my predecessors introduced legislation to address this issue.

These combined efforts have brought us to this point today, and I am hopeful once the work of the commission is completed, we can finally heal this very painful memory in Guam's history.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 308 is simple. It establishes a Federal process to review the relevant historical facts, determine the eligible claimants, the eligibility requirements and the total amount necessary for compensation arising from the Japanese occupation of Guam.

Last year, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the cost of this would be minimal and would not affect direct spending or receipts. Moreover, considering that the island of Guam had a very small population during the nearly 3 years of occupation during the war and given the available Federal and territorial records on this matter, I anticipate that any Federal commission which is established under this bill would be able to complete its work ex-

peditionally and provide Congress with the necessary recommendations to resolve this long-standing issue in a timely and fair fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), chairman of the Committee on Resources, for his assistance in bringing this matter to the floor, and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), our ranking Democrat member. It has been with their help that we have been able to address past concerns on this issue and move a step closer to justice in an expeditious fashion in the 107th Congress.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend our good chairman of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), for his support, and our ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for his endorsement of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as has been so eloquently stated by the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD), the commission to review reparations for the people of Guam, who were subjected to death, forced labor, forced marches and internment during World War II is long overdue.

Guam was the only land under the jurisdiction of the United States to be occupied by Japanese forces during World War II. The people of Guam could have, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, greeted Japanese military forces with open arms and perhaps spared themselves some of the misery they suffered during 3 years of brutal occupation by Japanese forces, but they did not. These native Guamanians were proud Americans since the annexation of Guam by America in 1898 after the Spanish-American War.

In response to their loyalty, 56 years after the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to adjudicate these claims, we are still debating whether we should establish a commission to study whether the people of Guam who suffered during this occupation should receive reparations.

Mr. Speaker, it has been 56 years. Even the Department of the Navy supported reparations decades ago. Direct action on the part of this Congress is long, long overdue. This legislation has been introduced in every Congress since Guam has had a delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives to address the war, the subject of the World War II atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers against these loyal Americans. This is my seventh term now in this Chamber. I can personally attest that the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) has been trying to get this issue addressed since he has been here, and our former colleague, Mr. Ben Blaz, did the same before him, and be-

fore Mr. Blaz, Mr. Tony Won Pat in the 1970s.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation. I also feel compelled to speak out that we should be doing more. A similar bill passed the House late last year, and I appreciate the leadership agreeing to take up this bill early in this Congress so the Senate will have more time to act on it.

Mr. Speaker, the territory of Guam stands today as one of our most important strategic centers throughout the Asian Pacific region. Our Nation has established well over a \$10 billion military presence in Guam, a first-class Air Force base that has proved so crucial in bombing operations during the Vietnam War, and a naval installation that is critical to provide resources and support for our armed forces throughout the Asian-Pacific region.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce these points to my colleagues in the House as to why this legislation is so important and why it needs the support of this body. One, some 22,000 native Guamanians were the only Americans living in the land area under the sovereignty of the United States that was occupied for some 3 years by Japanese military forces during World War II. Two, I am not going to ask why it was the policy of our government to evacuate only U.S. citizens living in Guam, but leave the native Guamanians, who were all U.S. nationals, subject to the control and sovereignty of our own government, they were left to fend for themselves for these 3 years while the Japanese occupied the island of Guam.

Mr. Speaker, for 3 years, these United States nationals were subject to some of the worst atrocities committed by Japanese military forces during their occupation of Guam from 1941 to 1944.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a pleasant story to share with my colleagues today, but we need to put ourselves in the shoes of some of the descendants of these families who suffered so much. It is not a pleasant story to hear when the head of one's father has been decapitated by a Japanese soldier, or if one's mother or sister or wife was being raped by these Japanese forces.

I only say just a fraction, from talking to some of the descendants who are still living today, of the atrocities; and just the forced marches. The way that these people were treated, I say it even borders on genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I plead with my colleagues today, let this bill pass. We owe it to these proud Americans.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for favorable consideration of this bill. I thank all involved.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 308, the Guam Claims Review Commission Act. This legislation takes essential steps toward identifying all

relevant facts and circumstances of the implementation and effectiveness of the Guam Meritorious Claims Act. Everyone needs to be fairly compensated.

From December 8, 1941, until July 21, 1944 Japanese armed forces occupied the U.S. territory of Guam. During that period, residents of Guam were subjected to injury, forced labor, internment, and, in some cases, death. In 1945, Congress passed the Guam Meritorious Claims Act (PL 79-224), which, for a period of one year, authorized the Navy to settle claims for property damage on Guam resulting from the Japanese occupation. Claims for property damage exceeding \$5,000 and claim for personal injury or death, however, had to be forwarded to Congress. A report issued in 1947 by a civilian commission appointed by the secretary found, among other things, that some claimants offered to reduce their claim below \$5,000 to expedite their claims.

H.R. 308 would establish Guam War Claims Review Commission, composed of five uncompensated members appointed by the Interior secretary with input from Guam's governor and House delegate. The commission would have nine months to submit a report containing comments and recommendations to Congress and the executive branch.

As part of that process, the commission would review all relevant Federal and Guam territorial law, Guam and U.S. archives regarding Federal payments for war claims in Guam; receive testimony of individuals who personally experienced the occupations; determine whether there was parity of war claims paid to the residents of Guam as compared with awards made similarly affected U.S. citizens or nations in other occupied territories; and advise whether additional compensation may be necessary to compensate the people of Guam for death, personal injury, forced labor, and internment.

The commission should have been created before long ago. We can, however, take appropriate action today to ensure that claimants are justly compensated by the United States of America. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 308.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 308, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TIME FOR CLEAR CREEK COUNTY, COLORADO, TO DISPOSE OF CERTAIN LANDS

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 223) to amend the Clear Creek County, Colorado, Public Lands Transfer Act of 1993 to provide additional time for Clear Creek County to dispose of certain lands transferred to the county under the Act.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 223

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That section 5(c)(2) of the Clear Creek County, Colorado, Public Lands Transfer Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-253; 108 Stat. 677) is amended by striking "the date 10 years after the date of enactment of this Act" and by inserting "May 19, 2015".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 223, introduced by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), amends section 5 of the Clear Creek County, Colorado, Public Lands Transfer Act of 1993.

The act clarified Federal land ownership questions in Clear Creek County, Colorado, and provided Clear Creek County time to dispose of transferred property. This amendment extends the time needed for Clear Creek County to sell certain lands that it received from the Federal government under the 1993 act.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 223 is a non-controversial and bipartisan bill that is nearly identical to a bill that was passed by the House during the 106th session of Congress. The only difference is that this bill would extend the time for the county to sell the lands in question for 1 year longer than the time period contained in the bill that passed the House last year.

This additional 1-year time period is necessary to allow for the additional time that has elapsed while the Congress has had this matter under consideration before the bill was enacted into law.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, as its author, I obviously support passage of this bill. I want to thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), the chairman of the Committee on Resources, and our ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for making it possible for the House to consider it today.

I introduced the bill last year at the request of the commissioners of Clear Creek County. It was passed by the House last fall, but time ran out before the Senate could complete action on it prior to the end of the 106th Congress.

The bill amends section 5 of the Clear Creek County, Colorado, Public Lands Transfer Act of 1993. The effect of the amendment would be to allow Clear

Creek County additional time to determine the future disposition of some former Federal land that was transferred to the county under that section of the 1993 act.

The 1993 act was originally proposed by my predecessor, Congressman David Skaggs. Its purpose was to clarify Federal land ownership questions in Clear Creek County while helping to consolidate the Bureau of Land Management administration in eastern Colorado, and assisting with protecting open space and preserving historic sites.

As part of its plan to merge its eastern Colorado operations into one administrative office, the BLM has determined that it would be best to dispose of most of its surface lands in north-eastern Colorado.

The 1993 act helped achieve that goal by transferring some 14,000 acres of land from the Bureau of Land Management to the U.S. Forest Service, to the State of Colorado, to Clear Creek County, and to the towns of Georgetown and Silver Plume. Of course, the BLM would have sold all these lands, and the local governments could have applied for parcels under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Under current law, however, BLM would have first had to have completed detailed boundary surveys. Since the land in question included many odd-shaped parcels, including some measured literally in inches, the BLM estimated these surveys could have taken another 15 years to complete and could have cost as much as \$18 million.

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Mr. Speaker, but the estimated value of these lands was only \$3 million. Because these administrative costs were expected to be so much higher than the value of these lands, their disposal under existing law could never have been completed, and this would have been the worst of all outcomes. Because, after reaching the conclusion that these lands should be transferred, BLM would in effect stop managing them, to the extent that they could be managed at all.

In short, until some means could be found to enable their transfer, these 14,000 acres were effectively abandoned property, potentially attracting all the problems that befall property left uncared for and ignored.

The 1993 Act responded to that situation. Under it, about 3,500 acres of BLM land in Clear Creek County were transferred to the Arapaho National Forest. Another 3,200 acres of land were transferred to the State of Colorado, the county, and the towns of Georgetown and Silver Plume. Finally, about 7,300 acres were transferred to the county.

The bill before us deals today only with those 7,300 acres that were transferred to the county. The 1993 Act provides that after it prepares a comprehensive land use plan, the county may resell some of the land. Other parcels will be transferred to local governments, including the county, to be retained for recreation and public purposes.